

CONFIDENTIAL
Review Staff:

11 December 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: DD/S&T
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OGC
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IG
Comptroller
D/DCI/IC
✓ DD/NIO

SUBJECT : Review of HSC and SSC Drafts

In anticipation of the Agency's review of HSC and SSC drafts of reports, an attempt has been made to address the problems involved in ensuring access to drafts for at least security review, and for such factual review as the respective houses may wish. The SSC staff has indicated a readiness to receive other comments as well.

The attached paper was prepared to serve as an approach to conducting such reviews, having been prepared initially for the HSC. It has been reviewed by the Action Plan Task Force, and General Wilson suggested that it be considered by the Deputies and others who may have a contribution to the Agency's review of draft reports.

If we can obtain some agreement on procedures with the respective committees, information on what might be expected will be circulated.

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S.D. Breckinridge
Chief, Review Staff

cc: SC/DCI

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3 December 1975

SUBJECT: Principles and Standards for Review of HSC
Draft Papers

1. HSC Staff members have indicated their concern that the technical security review by the Agency of those portions of their report intended for publication in unclassified form will be viewed by the media and public as some form of censorship. They are concerned that the Agency will presume on the opportunity not only to attempt to influence the report, but will employ "security" to suppress portions of the report that are only critical or embarrassing. We have reminded them that the Agency is subject to the President's commitment that security will not be used to suppress criticisms that do not constitute security problems. The problem will be a practical exercise in protecting intelligence sources and methods. While unclassified publication of the report entails some exposures in any event, the Agency's review must be professional, sound and defensible. The purpose of this memorandum is to discuss the approach that is to be taken. It has been coordinated with the Deputy Directors.

2. As a general practice, we will continue to propose sanitization or paraphrasing to (1) protect sensitive sources and methods, (2) protect foreign liaison relations, and (3) and protect the names of cooperating individuals and commercial and other organizations. Sample situations in which security questions may arise are below:

a. General summary statements of operational activity [redacted]

[redacted] will not be objected to on security grounds alone. Specific references, however, singling out countries and so describing persons that they can be identified, would be questioned.

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g. Reference to specific intelligence gaps that will reveal U.S. capabilities in areas important to the national interest.

h. Appraisals of the performance characteristics of Communist or other foreign military equipment should be carefully considered before agreement to release in unclassified form. If the information has been released officially there is no reason to object to its publication in the unclassified HSC report, unless textual treatment raises other issues of security; if it is in the public domain, but has not been confirmed by official publication, its inclusion in the report should be considered carefully. Publication of estimated performance characteristics may reveal technical collection capabilities. It may be that publication of performance characteristics would come in discussion of a current policy issue (e.g., the BACKFIRE bomber), which would raise additional questions of classification.

i. Reporting on recent or current foreign capabilities and intentions, and estimates of these, should be reviewed closely for discussion with the HSC Staff. National policy-level materials, which may compromise national interests, must be handled specially.

j. Specific organizational descriptions must be studied carefully. In this context, any detailed summary of overseas organization and activities must be reviewed for unintended disclosures, or obvious revelations.



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1. Inclusion of non-CIA paper, coming from the Executive level of government, should be identified for appropriate clearance.

m. The interests of other government agencies and departments will be kept in mind, to ensure that their interests are considered for coordination. The above list of questions is intended as a sample of the sort of issues that may arise. The nature of the subject matter is such that a comprehensive list cannot be prepared in advance, and the issues will have to be dealt with as they arise.

The above list of questions is intended as a sample of the sort of issues that may arise. The nature of the subject matter is such that a comprehensive list cannot be prepared in advance, and the issues will have to be dealt with as they arise.

3. As there is some concern on the part of the HSC Staff members that the security review agreed between Chairman Pike and the President may constitute some form of censorship, care should be exercised to raise only real issues of security, where it is proposed that the draft is intended for unclassified publication. The manner in which the Agency handles its security review also will have an effect on the attitude of the HSC Staff members, so statements of security reservations must be sober and professional, with clear alternatives being offered for how the question can be resolved. The Agency's purpose is to facilitate publication of a properly sanitized, declassified report, where unclassified publication is intended.

4. A relatively consistent response by the Agency will facilitate exchanges with HSC Staff members. The above discussion is intended to contribute to this. Additionally, it will also help if the Agency's format for conveying its comments is consistent. To this end, comments should be made on a separate paper, each comment keyed to the page and line of the draft, first stating the problem raised by the statement in question, why its unclassified publication in that form is subject to reservation, and proposing either a way to resolve the problem editorially by rephrasing the passage, or simply by deleting certain specific statements where they do not impair the thrust of the paper or the flow or writing. This would serve as the basis for discussions with HSC Staff members, giving them a complete statement on each issue in order to prepare for further exchanges.

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5. It is anticipated that working sessions will be arranged following the initial review, to address the questions raised by the comments.

6. The HSC Staff people have indicated an interest in Agency comments on the factual accuracy of the drafts, although it is not yet clear that the Agency will be requested to conduct such a review. This question is sure to arise in the review of reports planned for unclassified publication, but the preparation of classified reports by the HSC do not require review by the Agency. There is nothing at present to prevent the Agency from offering comments on factual accuracy or, for that matter, on conclusions when the opportunity presents itself; however, the HSC is not obliged to accept these comments. Any factual corrections that are offered should be handled as are the security comments, separately, soberly and professionally.

7. The Review Staff will undertake to coordinate the distribution of papers for review, to monitor progress, and assist in working reviews of comments with HSC Staff members that follow the review.

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